

# Getting Started

This section provides an overview to help you become familiar with **Discover MyPlate** components and supporting resources.

## Discover MyPlate Components:

- **Curriculum Training for Teachers**
- **Teacher's Guide\***
- **Emergent Reader Mini Books\***  
(6 different books, 25 of each)
- **Emergent Readers: Teacher's Edition\***
- **Reach for the Sky Song\***
- **Food Group Friends Profile Cards\*** (6)
- **Food Cards\*** (40)
- **Look and Cook Recipes\*** (4 recipes, 25 of each)
- **Student Workbooks\*** (25 of each)
- **The Five Food Groups Poster\***
- **Parent Handouts\***  
(5 different handouts, 25 of each)

To request print copies or download online, visit:  
<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>.

\*Provided in Teacher's Kit

## Curriculum Training for Teachers

One of the best ways to become familiar with **Discover MyPlate** is to participate in a training workshop. Team Nutrition has created a free **Discover MyPlate Curriculum Training for Teachers**, which State agencies, local educational agencies, school districts, and other trainers can use to orient teachers and school staff to the **Discover MyPlate** curriculum. It can be viewed, ordered, and downloaded at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>.

## Lesson Structure

The menu-like design of **Discover MyPlate** lessons allows you to select from a variety of engaging activities that address different learning styles. Lessons are divided into five sections to make your planning easier: **Introduction**, **Core Learning Activities**, **Center Time**, **Reflection & Assessment**, and **Extra Helpings** (extension activities). Activities within each section note the estimated time required and whether it's a whole group or small group activity.

While you may choose the activities that best suit your needs and resources, we recommend that you try all that are offered for maximum learning. It is important to start with Lesson 1, as it gives students a foundation for understanding the five food groups. The curriculum may be taught over 6 weeks or spread out over several months. Lesson 4 includes a seed growing activity that can be completed indoors any time of the year. However, some teachers prefer to teach this lesson in conjunction with other school garden activities during their region's growing season.

### ★TEACHER TIP★

For more resources about **MyPlate**, eating healthy, and being physically active, visit <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>.



## Discover *MyPlate* in a Year

There are many ways you can schedule the teaching of **Discover *MyPlate*** components throughout the school year. The six lessons can be taught in 6 weeks beginning at the start of the school year. They can be spread out over 10 months as well. The **Book Club**, **Cafeteria Connections**, and **Extra Helpings** in each lesson can be used throughout the year.

See the chart below for an example of how to teach **Discover *MyPlate*** over the course of the school year.

Month	Discover <i>MyPlate</i> Component
<b>AUGUST/SEPTEMBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 1: <b>Meet the Five Food Group Friends</b></li> <li>• Back-to-School Friendship Celebration</li> <li>• <b><i>Friendship Pocket</i></b> Look and Cook Activity</li> </ul>
<b>OCTOBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 2: <b>Discover <i>MyPlate</i>!</b></li> <li>• Halloween &amp; Fall Harvest Celebration</li> </ul> <b>School Lunch Week</b>
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 3: <b>Eat Your Colors!</b></li> <li>• <b>Crunchy Rainbow Wrap</b> Look and Cook Activity</li> <li>• Thanksgiving Celebration</li> </ul>
<b>DECEMBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome Winter! Celebration</li> <li>• Lesson 1-2 Extra Helpings</li> </ul>
<b>JANUARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 3 Extra Helpings</li> </ul>
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 4: <b>Planting the Seeds for Healthier Eating</b></li> <li>• Valentine's Day Celebration</li> </ul>
<b>MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 5: <b>Starting Our Day With <i>MyPlate</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Fruit-a-licious Breakfast Cup</i></b> Look and Cook Activity</li> <li>• St. Patrick's Day Celebration &amp; Dr. Seuss' Birthday</li> <li>• 100th Day of School Celebration</li> </ul> <b>School Breakfast Week</b>
<b>APRIL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swing Into Spring Celebration</li> <li>• Earth Day Celebration (April 22)</li> <li>• Lesson 4 Extra Helpings</li> <li>• Celebrate School Library Month with Book Club selections from Lessons 1-4</li> </ul> <b>School Library Month</b>
<b>MAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 6: <b>Let's Play, Let's Party!</b></li> <li>• <b><i>Food Group Friend</i></b> Look and Cook Activity</li> <li>• Lesson 5 Extra Helpings</li> </ul>
<b>JUNE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End-of-School-Year Celebration</li> <li>• Lesson 6 Extra Helpings</li> <li>• Dramatic Play Activities</li> </ul>



### ★TEACHER TIP★

If resources permit, consider laminating the food cards and poster, or use poster tack (instead of tape) to affix and remove cards easily.

## The Five Food Groups Poster

This colorful classroom poster is used as an interactive tool to help students sort foods into the five food groups. It is also used as a visual aid for discussions about the **MyPlate** icon.

## Food Cards

These bright, graphic cards allow students to take learning into their own hands as they sort through the five food groups and explore familiar and new foods. Used in every lesson, they offer a chance to apply nutrition knowledge in fun and interactive ways and allow for discussion of additional foods in each food group — beyond the foods shown in the emergent readers.



## Food Group Friends Profile Cards

These colorful profile cards feature each of the five **Food Group Friends** and **MyPlate Nate** and **MyPlate Kate**. Each card lists the foods on the back that makes up each **Food Group Friend** or, in the case of **MyPlate Nate** and **Kate**, shares what they do to stay healthy. Use the cards to show and tell your students about the five food groups and a **MyPlate** meal.

## Reach for the Sky Song

This original **Reach for the Sky** song encourages children to get up and move as it reinforces learning of the five food groups. The song is featured in several lessons (1, 2, 3, and 6), but you can use it anytime to reinforce core nutritional concepts and get kids energized. You will need either a CD or MP3 player with speakers to play it from your computer. See p. 79 for lyrics. A copy of the song is provided on the enclosed CD or may be downloaded at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/multimedia/kindergarten.mp3>.



## Book Club

Each lesson offers examples of popular children's books and discussion questions, which can be used to generate further conversation related to the lesson topic and objectives. There are also six **Discover MyPlate Emergent Readers** (described on the following page) included as part of the curriculum.

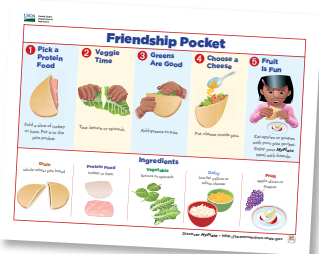




## ★TEACHER TIP★

The emergent readers, student workbook, and poster are available in print for free to schools participating in the Child Nutrition Programs, such as the National School Lunch Program, while supplies last. Additional copies may be requested using the Team Nutrition order form at:

<http://tn.ntis.gov/>



## Emergent Readers

**Discover MyPlate** includes six **Emergent Readers** featuring kindergarten-level sight words that help students build literacy skills while learning about the five food groups and **MyPlate**. The **Emergent Readers** are designed as mini books for students and have black-and-white illustrations that children may color. The six **Emergent Readers** are:

- **Fruits** includes the sight words: the, is, eat, are, I (used in Lessons 1, 3, and 5).
- **Vegetables** includes the sight words: I, have (used in Lessons 1 and 3).
- **Protein Foods** includes the sight words: I, see (used in Lesson 1).
- **Grains** includes sight words: I, like (used in Lessons 1 and 5).
- **Dairy** includes sight words: has, make, she, can, likes, and (used in Lessons 1 and 5).
- **A MyPlate Meal** includes the sight words: I, she, he, we, has, have (used in Lessons 2 and 6).

A **Discover MyPlate Emergent Readers: Teacher's Edition** is also included for you to use during instruction. The **Teacher's Edition** is larger than the mini books and in full color. It features all six of the **Emergent Readers**, along with additional activity and discussion ideas.

In addition to using the **Discover MyPlate Emergent Readers** as part of the lesson instruction, you may also use them throughout the school year during read-aloud, independent, or guided reading time, or during “free-choice” time. For additional literacy exercises, download the reader text at the Team Nutrition Web site (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate>) to create your own cut-apart words and sentences. Give your school librarian a set of the **Discover MyPlate Emergent Reader** mini books to feature in the library.

After you are done using the **Emergent Reader** mini books in class, send copies home with students so they can continue practicing their reading skills with their families. Each mini book has a place for the student to write his or her name.

## Food Club

Lessons 1, 3, 5, and 6 include food preparation activities tied to the lesson's learning objectives. These activities have been tested by kindergarten teachers and students to make sure that they work in real class settings. Opportunities to see, smell, touch, taste, and explore healthy foods help children overcome their reluctance to trying new foods and are critical for changing eating behaviors. So while it might be a little messy, many teachers find them to be among the most rewarding and memorable activities!

**Look and Cook Recipes:** These pictorial recipes (pp 66-78) offer students a simple and visual explanation of the food preparation steps. Display these where students can see them while they are preparing their snacks.

Color copies of recipes are provided for each student in English and Spanish. After using the recipes in class, send them home so students can make these foods with their families. We encourage you to seek help from your school district's Nutrition Services Director, local chefs or dietitians, and/or parent volunteers. The goal is to create positive associations with the foods you are making, so try to make the experience fun. Some kids may not want to taste everything, and that's okay. They'll be more likely to try it if you taste it first.

## Food Safety

**Keep it clean:** Good food safety practices are critical to preventing the spread of bacteria and foodborne illness. Follow these steps to keep foods safe:

- Everyone (teachers, helpers, and students) should wash his or her hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom. Lesson 1 offers a **Food Club** and **Student Workbook** activity that reviews correct hand-washing steps with students.
- Wash food preparation surfaces with hot, soapy water before and after preparing foods.
- Consider using paper towels to clean up. If you use cloth towels, wash them often in the hot cycle of a washing machine
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Do not use soap or detergent.

- Rub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables under running tap water, or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.
- Keep books, backpacks, and shopping bags off work surfaces where food is prepared or served.

**Keep it cool:** Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Do not overstuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to help keep foods safe. Keeping a constant refrigerator temperature of 40 °F or below is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Use an appliance thermometer to be sure the temperature is consistently 40 °F or below. The freezer temperature should be 0 °F or below.



## Food Allergies

Each year, millions of Americans have allergic reactions to food. Although most food allergies cause relatively mild and minor symptoms, some food allergies can cause severe reactions, and may even be life-threatening.

There is no cure for food allergies. Strict avoidance of food allergens and early recognition and management of allergic reactions to food are important measures to prevent serious health consequences.

Check with parents of the children in your care to make sure that you are aware of any food allergies students may have. Your school nurse and Nutrition Services Director may also be good resources regarding student allergies.

### Top 8 Food Allergens

More than 170 foods are known to cause an allergic reaction in some people. There are eight foods that most commonly trigger an allergic reaction. These foods, and any



ingredients made from them, are known as “the top 8 foods” and should be identified as allergens on food labels. These foods include: fish, shellfish, eggs, milk, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, and soybeans.

Non-food items, such as arts and craft materials, may contain trace amounts of these foods as well.

### Know the Symptoms

Symptoms of food allergies typically appear from within a few minutes to a few hours after a person has eaten the food to which he or she is allergic.

Allergic reactions can include:

- Hives
- Flushed skin or rash

- Tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth
- Face, tongue, or lip swelling
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Abdominal cramps
- Coughing or wheezing
- Dizziness and/or lightheadedness
- Swelling of the throat and vocal cords
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of consciousness

Prompt emergency treatment is critical for someone having a severe allergic reaction, called anaphylaxis. Review your school's food allergy plan so that you know how to respond.

For additional food allergy management and prevention information, refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies In Schools and Early Care and Education Programs* at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/index.htm>.





## Cafeteria Connections

The school cafeteria is more than just a place to eat lunch or breakfast; it is a learning laboratory for nutrition education! If kindergarteners participate in lunchtime or breakfast at your school, this is a time when they will see what a balanced meal looks like, observe what others are eating, experience new foods, and have the opportunity to make food choices. Set up a time to meet with your school district's Nutrition Services Director about this unit before you begin teaching the lessons.

Each lesson offers **Cafeteria Connections** (in the **Core Learning Activities** section) to help your students apply what they are learning in the classroom and put new skills into practice in the school cafeteria. You may want to conduct some of these activities as part of “back-to-school” events, even if you choose to do the remaining curriculum later during the year. Lesson 1 features activities that introduce students to the school cafeteria and school nutrition professionals (i.e., school food services). Lessons 2, 3, 4, and 6 include literacy-building exercises connected to the cafeteria.

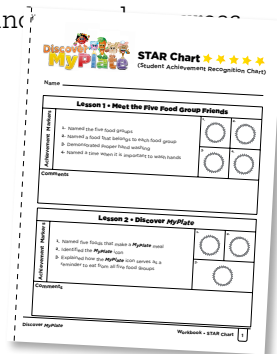
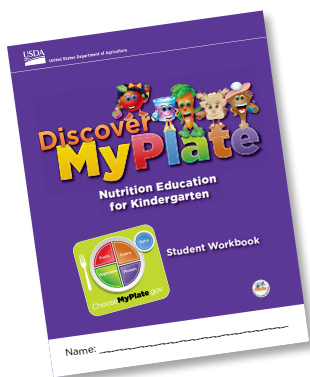
## Student Workbook

Students will receive their own workbook filled with activities that further explore each lesson topic and reinforce learning objectives. Workbook activities meet education standards for literacy, letter-sound correspondence, counting, sequencing, classifying objects, identifying healthy behaviors, and more. The answer key can be found on pp. 80-81.

**STAR Chart:** Evaluating and measuring your students' understanding with new concepts is especially important when it comes to behavior change. In conjunction with learning objectives and formative assessments offered in each lesson, achievement markers are featured at the end of each lesson under the **Reflection & Assessment** section as a way to assess student understanding as a class. A **Discover MyPlate STAR Chart** (found on the first three pages of the **Student Workbook**) is a supplemental assessment-tracking tool that may be used in a variety of ways, depending on your time and resources.

It can be used as an ongoing assessment tool to keep track of individual students' accomplishments per lesson or completed after the entire **Discover MyPlate** unit has been taught. Students earn “stars” (or stickers) for their achievements during each lesson, and space is provided for you to write comments. **STAR Charts** can be used as part of a progress report that is sent home or shared in parent-teacher conferences.

**Discover MyPlate Certificate:** Upon completion of Lesson 6, you can give students a certificate (found at the back of the **Student Workbook**) recognizing their achievement and encouraging them to continue to make healthy food choices and be physically active.



## Parent Involvement

Build a home-school connection by involving parents in **Discover MyPlate** activities. Begin by letting parents know that your class will be starting the **Discover MyPlate** lessons. Customize the copy to the right and include it in your communications with parents (e.g., newsletter, weekly folder, class blog). In Lesson 6, parents are invited to join the class in celebrating what students have learned through the **Discover MyPlate** curriculum and to participate in an easy food preparation activity. Let parents know about the date of this activity as early as possible so that they can make time to attend (see a sample communication on p. 60).

There are five colorful parent handouts to send home at various points after students have participated in the appropriate lesson. Each handout includes information for parents and interactive activities parents can do with their children:

- **Welcome to School Lunch!** shares information about how school meals have gotten healthier and includes an activity for children to sort lunch foods into the five food groups. It also includes a “Color Adventure” challenge where families taste-test new fruits and vegetables of different colors. (Send home after Lesson 1.)
- **Meet MyPlate** introduces families to the **MyPlate** icon and includes a **MyPlate** menu planner. (Send home after Lesson 2.)
- **Snack Time!** provides information about choosing snack foods and beverages with less solid fat, added sugars, and sodium (salt). Children can tally family members' favorite ways to drink water. (Send home after Lesson 3.)
- **Be Your Best With Breakfast** encourages families to eat breakfast and to check out the School Breakfast Program at their school (if available). A fun breakfast tracker and badge are included. (Send home after Lesson 5 along with additional information about your school's breakfast program.)
- **Move, Play, Have Fun!** offers a table of fun physical activities that families can cross off as they complete them. (Send home after Lesson 6.)

Send home the **Look and Cook Recipes** and **Discover MyPlate Emergent Reader** mini books after they are used in class, so parents may repeat these activities with their children. In addition, you may want to send home the **STAR Chart** (from the **Student Workbook**) as part of a child's progress report or refer to it at parent-teacher conferences. **Student Workbooks** may be sent home after your class has completed the **Discover MyPlate** curriculum.

## Classroom Celebrations

Celebrating holidays and other momentous times of year — from Thanksgiving to the 100th Day of School to Earth Day — are an important part of the kindergarten classroom! We have provided a list of ideas (pp. 61-65) to help you incorporate healthier activities and foods into your classroom celebrations.

## Dear Parent,

Our class is embarking on an exciting educational journey into the world of nutrition and health! Over the next

(# of weeks/months)

we will be learning about the five food groups, healthy meal planning, how to be physically active in class, and much more! Keep an eye out for helpful handouts with information, tips, and activities to use at home to continue your child's learning.

